

HOLIDAY PARTIES AND GIFTS

GIFTS AND INVITATIONS

Are there limits on holiday gifts Federal employees may accept?

- Yes; gifts offered during the holiday season are no different than gifts offered at other times. They may not be accepted if given because of the employee's Government position or from someone with interests before the Department, unless an exception applies. Common exceptions are: (1) gifts based on a personal relationship and (2) gifts worth \$20 or less (if no more than \$50 in gifts is received from the same source during the year).

May Federal employees accept invitations to holiday parties?

- Yes, but an invitation from anyone with interests before the Department may be accepted only if it is: (1) based on a personal relationship, (2) \$20 or less in value, or (3) it is to an event attended by a large number and broad range of persons and the employee's supervisor approves attendance as benefitting the agency. Approval is not appropriate for an event that is primarily entertainment.

GIFTS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES

May employees collect money for an office holiday party?

- Yes, but only if participation is entirely voluntary—no one may be coerced into participating. Those interested in attending may be required to contribute a reasonable set amount to pay for the per person costs. Supervisors should not request funds and may not require participation.

May co-workers exchange gifts?

- Yes, if all persons are participating voluntarily. Employees may participate in mutual gift exchanges (such as a "secret Santa" exchange), but the value should be limited to no more than \$10 if subordinates will be exchanging gifts with supervisors.

May Federal employees give holiday gifts to supervisors or collect funds for such gifts from co-workers?

- Yes, if the value of the gift is \$10 or less. If funds are collected for a gift, the value of the gift (not just the contribution) must still be \$10 or less and all contributions must be entirely voluntary.

A WORD ABOUT ETHICS

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